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ABSTRACT

This book, which is based on a 7-month ethnographic study of working conditions and employment practices at a biomedical electronics factory, examines the impact that high tech has had on the relationship between management and workers in the manufacturing industry. The following are among the topics discussed in the book's 10 chapters: (1) the nature of high-tech factory work (the organization of production in high-tech firms, union avoidance as a primary management control strategy, promotion opportunities in high-tech production work); (2) the corporate history of biomed (the industry's birth in the 1970s and development in the 1980s, management teams, advisory boards, recent trends); (3) the processes of seeking and beginning work at a factory job; (4) the processes of adapting to high-tech factory work; (5) high-tech labor processes (work attitudes, worker ingenuity, work in different factory departments, technological change and the labor process); (6) the dictatorship of high-tech management (factory discipline, the use of line foremen, time studies, production work reports, management tricks, layoffs, firings); (7) factory life (race, ethnicity, gender, and occupational grouping and factory politics); (8) rank and file discontent; (9) talking union; and (10) prospects for the return of the despotic factory regime. The bibliography lists 211 references. (MN)